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GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS.

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A NEED FOR A STATEMENT OF SIMFLIFIED CRITERIA BY WHICH SECONDARY SCHOOLS MAY MEASURE THE EXCELLENCE OF THEIR FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS HAS STIMULATED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THESE GUIDELINES, DESIGNED TO ASSIST IN SETTING UP THE BEST POSSIBLE AUDIOLINGUALLY-ORIENTED CURRICULUM TO MEET THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF SCHOOLS. FOLLOWING AN OUTLINE OF BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT SEQUENCE OF STUDY, TEXTS AND MATERIALS, AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT, THE GUIDE LISTS, IN QUESTIONNAIRE FORM, CRITERIA THAT INDICATE SUPERIOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS. HIGHLIGHTED IN THE QUESTIONING ARE THE AREAS OF (1) GENERAL METHODOLOGY, (2) FLES, JUNIOR HIGH, AND BEGINNING AND ADVANCED HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS, (3) LATIN PROGRAMS, AND (4) TESTING AND EVALUATION. (AB)

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GUIDELINES

FOR EVALUATING

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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INTRODUCTION

The foreign language supervisors in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction have concluded from teaching experience, extensive observation in classrooms throughout the state, and discussions with other teachers and state foreign language supervisors that there is a great need for a statement of simplified criteria by which the schools may measure the excellence of their foreign language programs.

Consequently, it is our hope that this short guideline will provide suggestions for developing the best possible foreign language curriculum to meet the needs of each individual school, and will focus attention on the audio-lingual-visual method of instruction as the most appropriate way to teach a modern foreign language in the classroom. Emphasis should be placed upon the fact that this method, properly taught, <u>does</u> include grammar explanation and drills. However, skills in grammar and writing should be emphasized only after reasonable progress has been demonstrated in a comprehension-speaking sequence by the student. Writing is not designed to meet the needs of people who are <u>learning</u> a language. It is designed only for those who already know how to say the ideas they wish to express. Therefore, <u>it is essential that all students should have an oral command of the lesson material before exposure to reading, writing, and rules of grammar</u>.

This guideline is an attempt to list those questions most pertinent to establishing or maintaining an excellent foreign language program. It is our opinion that all questions included herein should be answered "yes". A negative response to these questions would indicate a need for a thorough evaluation and improvement of the existing foreign language program.

We are aware that some teachers may not agree with the philosophy expressed by these questions. Your state foreign language supervisors would welcome the opportunity to discuss these and other questions with you.

Charles Jay

Pat Castle

G U I D E L I N E S

FOR EVALUATING

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

I. SEQUENTIAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

A. Who should take a foreign language?

1. The opportunity of learning to speak a foreign language should be a part of the basic curriculum of all students, and the widespread tendency to encourage only students of exceptional ability to study a foreign language is a form of academic "elitism" that must be discouraged.

2. Any foreign language program should be developed in such a manner that the average student in a normal class can achieve the essential goals of the course.

3. In schools with sufficient enrollment it is preferable to have homogeneously-grouped classes in order to more easily meet the specific needs of the exceptionally gifted and college-bound student as well as the average student.

4. Whatever the situation, the good teacher must provide the supplementary work necessary for each student to achieve his greatest potential.

B. How long should the foreign language be studied?

1. The two-year foreign language program does not meet the needs of present day students.

2. A three-year program is the absolute minimum sequence which should be offered to high school students.

3. A six-year program in at least one foreign language should be the goal of every school system in Illinois.

4. Any language should be studied in an unbroken sequence from the grade in which it is started through grade twelve.

5. Schools should avoid the luxury of attempting to offer more than one foreign language until a long sequence in one language is successful. One language taught for four years is much superior to two or more languages taught for only two years.

C. What texts and materials should be used in the classroom?

1. Any of the well-known, high-quality, sequential audio-lingual-visual series should be used as the basic text materials for

each language. The term "level" should be understood as meaning a certain segment of sequential development within the total language program. It usually takes more than one school year to master the material commonly included in a textbook "level", but the teacher must never omit any of the units in these sequential text series.

2. Traditional programs which emphasize grammar-translation instead of the more fundamental skills of comprehension and speaking should be thoroughly examined and, in all probability, discarded at least in the beginning years.

3. The audio-visual aids which correlate with the text materials of each lesson are a necessary part of the course. The importance of using them correctly cannot be overemphasized.

4. Although supplementary materials are desirable in any foreign language program, great care must be taken in the beginning years to select materials that are appropriate to the goals sought at that level of instruction.

5. All teachers must realize that visual aids are a valuable asset in learning a foreign language. Whenever possible, a visual should be used to convey the meaning of a word, phrase, sentence or abstract idea rather than the use of English.

6. Common visual aids that will prove helpful are pictures, slides, filmstrips, films, flash cards, transparencies, charts, and objects themselves. These should be used daily.

D. What electronic equipment should be used in the classroom?

1. The materials which compose any audio-lingual course require, by their nature, the use of some electronic equipment.

2. A minimum essential for each classroom is a tape recorder and the tapes to accompany the text.

3. The excellent foreign language program should include the daily use of short, intensive taped-drills which reinforce the text materials. Electronic equipment with high-quality, audio-active earphones and boom microphones is an asset to foreign language learning.

4. The confusion that results from the great variety of electronic equipment on the market necessitaites careful discussion with state foreign language supervisors, other specialists, and company representatives before any decision to purchase is made.

5. Today more than ever, all teachers and administrators should be aware that electronic equipment in each classroom is far more desirable than the separate language laboratories which were recommended some years ago.

6. Teachers and school administrators should recognize the fact that dial access information retrieval systems and programmed learning devices which promote individual learning rates, will eventually replace the present classroom equipment.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS

INDICATE EXCELLENT FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

I. GENERAL METHODOLOGY

1. Does the teacher maintain a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning?

2. Do the teaching techniques display understanding, enthusiasm, helpfulness, imagination, and sound learning procedures?

3. Are lessons and units carefully planned and conscientiously presented?

4. Is there an opportunity each day for maximum individual drill and recitation?

5. Is the presentation lively and varied?

6. Is the use of English kept to a minimum in the classroom?

7. Is each presentation carefully planned to achieve specific goals and solve problems related to learning the foreign language?

8. Is emphasis placed upon correct pronunciation at every level of learning?

9. Are practice records available for each beginning student for out-of-class assignments?

10. Are out-of-class assignments carefully explained and begun in class with attention given to eliminating "busy-work"?

11. Is the opportunity for remedial instruction provided?

12. Can students easily understand and use the materials studied in the dialogues, structure drills, and oral narratives of the text?

13. Are students able to read and write correctly what they can comprehend and say accurately in the language?

14. Can students who are terminating a four-year sequential program read selected works of fiction, popular magazines, and newspapers in the language?

15. Are electronic equipment and tapes used daily in short, intensive, drill periods (ten-minute maximum per drill) rather than in long, exhausting twenty or thirty minute drill periods?

16. Where a laboratory or electronic classroom is available, can facilities accommodate the needs of each student in the largest class?

17. Can the teacher operate the electronic equipment correctly?

18. Has the teacher learned how to use audio-lingual materials effectively?

II. ELEMENTARY FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

1. Is an elementary foreign language program considered a desirable part of the total school curriculum by the faculty and community and not merely an extra-curricular activity suitable only for gifted children?

2. Has a six-year foreign language program (7-12) been established before thought is given to developing the program in the elementary grades?

3. Is the basic goal of the FLES program the enjoyment of using a foreign language through the sequential development of simple comprehension and speaking skills?

4. Is one of the good sequential elementary foreign language series used as the basis for the program? (Developing one's own program is unnecessary and undesirable because excellent sequential programs are now available).

5. Does the FLES program provide an opportunity for every student to understand and speak the language while at the same time making authentic progress in the basic structures of the language?

6. Are the FLES teachers skilled in the methodology which will motivate the interest of children in learning a foreign language?

7. Are the FLES teachers sufficiently fluent in the foreign language to teach capably the materials at each level?

8. Does the class meet daily for at least twenty minutes?

9. Are many kinds of visual aids used daily in a lively presentation of the material to be learned?

10. Does the elementary teacher realize that at the beginning level the teaching of reading and writing in the foreign language is not desirable and very little, if any, time should be devoted to it?

11. Is writing introduced slowly, and does it consist mainly of dictation based on material already mastered orally?

12. Is the sequential elementary program closely articulated with the junior high program?

13. Is a realistic evaluation of the progress of each student made at the end of the elementary sequence by using standardized tests in order to determine whether the child can successfully continue in the junior high program?

III. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

1. Are parents and students made aware of the fact that foreign language study before high school should be thought of as material presented in addition to the high school course, and not instead of the high school program. High school credit should not be given for junior high school work unless the same language is studied for at least two additional years in high school.

2. Is the junior high school program articulated with previous elementary experiences to avoid a repetition of materials and to insure continuous progress?

3. Is it possible for a student who is beginning his study of a foreign language in grade 7 to continue through grade 12?

4. Are the materials used at this level appropriate for junior high school students?

5. Do classes meet daily for at least 30 minutes five days per week in grades 7 and 8?

6. Does the junior high school have and use electronic equipment comparable to that of the senior high school?

7. Do the junior high school teachers have the same professional qualifications as the high school teachers?

8. Is the equivalent of one year of beginning high school foreign language completed during grades 7 and 8?

9. Is a definite effort made to encourage those students who have successfully completed grade 8 to continue the study of the same language throughout high school?

IV. HIGH SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

A. ADMINISTRATION

1. Are school administrators and guidance counselors informed on pertinent aspects of the new approach to modern foreign language study (values, goals, techniques of study, criteria of pupil selectivity, and college entrance requirements)?

2. Does the school administration or the foreign language chairman provide for in-service training of foreign language personnel?

3. Is foreign travel, attendance at workshops, and credit courses encouraged by salary increments and/or released time?

4. Is the foreign language chairman allowed to assist in the selection of foreign language staff?

5. In large schools is there a department chairman or foreign language co-ordinator who observes classes on a regular basis, supervises other teachers, and calls regular meetings at least once a month to discuss common problems?

6. Is the foreign language staff urged to examine, evaluate and select new instructional materials and equipment?

7. Is a large proportion of the school population enrolled in foreign language classes?

8. Are classes on the beginning levels limited to not more than twenty students per class?

9. Are pupils encouraged to continue foreign language study as a result of good scheduling and good counseling practices?

10. Is each successful pupil able to study one foreign language for at least three years?

11. Are advanced classes offered even though enrollment is less than ten pupils?

12. Is an attempt being made to lengthen the sequence of foreign language study to more than four years?

B. BEGINNING HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS

1. Does the foreign language teacher have speaking competency in the language he teaches?

2. Are the course materials adequate to meet the objectives of the audio-lingual-visual method of modern foreign language teaching?

3. Are the skills of comprehension and speaking always taught in context?

4. Does the student achieve a high degree of fluency in the use of a controlled number of meaningful speech patterns?

5. Is vocabulary restricted to what is necessary for thorough and natural sounding practice of the forms and structures being studied?

6. Is reading and writing postponed until oral mastery is achieved in each lesson?

7. Does the teacher make a conscious effort to provide cultural information for each level without sacrificing time which should be devoted to a mastery of the language itself?

8. Does the teacher maintain thorough familiarity with current professional literature and developments in teaching foreign languages?

9. Is the teacher achieving goals that are consistant with the goals of the total foreign language program?

C. ADVANCED HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS

1. Does the program on the advanced levels take full advantage of the oral-aural skills already developed, and continue to develop them?

2. Is the major stress now on reading and writing?

3. Does vocabulary development, drawn mainly from reading, proceed rapidly after the basic patterns are mastered?

4. Are students reading with comprehension without translating?

5. Is the emphasis placed on reading well-known contemporary authors of clearly established reputation?

6. Does the reading consist of novels, short stories, plays, newspapers, magazines, etc., accompanied by discussions in the foreign language of the material read?

7. Is there appropiate supplemental reading material available for all advanced pupils?

8. Are students encouraged to use a dictionary written entirely in the language being studied?

9. Does reading, which is very important at the advanced levels, provide many and varied opportunities for the acquisition of cultural information?

10. Do cultural insights become a more important goal of learning?

11. Are students drilled on weak points of general grammatical structure only as they are encountered in the reading?

12. Is considerable class time devoted to oral reports, resumes, explanations, criticisms and questions based on the material read?

13. At the most advanced levels is time devoted to a discussion on literary style and form of the material read?

14. Are students writing with an awareness of grammatical structure, an enlarged use of vocabulary, and expressions of creativity appropriate to their level of study?

15. As style becomes observable in the reading, is it given attention in the students writing, emphasizing quality not quantity?

16. Is some time devoted to the development of the art of translation which means transposing or interpreting concepts from one language to another?

V. LATIN PROGRAMS

1. Does the Latin teacher work in close collaboration with departments of English, History, and Modern Foreign Languages in order to enrich learning experiences?

2. Is some emphasis placed upon history, literature, philosophy, art, and archeology as well as upon grammar and syntax?

3. Are text materials oriented away from the narrowly grammatical and factual approach to the study of Latin so that students are aware of the effect of Latin culture upon Western Civilization?

4. Does the teacher create among his students an awareness of contemporary political, ethical, and esthetic issues?

5. Is an appreciation of the structure and beauty of the Latin language itself instilled in the mind of the student?

6. Does the teacher impress upon students that Latin should not be studied merely to serve as an aid in the understanding and manipulation of the English Language?

7. Does the student understand the structure of the language at his level of achievement?

8. Is each student given an opportunity for meaningful daily recitation?

9. Are some audio-lingual-visual materials used to supplement text materials?

10. Has each pupil attained some skill in direct comprehension of written material as well as in translation of Latin into English?

11. Is a minimum of written work required throughout the study of Latin?

12. Have students in advanced classes read classical masterpieces with understanding and appreciation?

13. Do students in advanced classes, in addition to Latin readings, also read the classics in translation in order to cover a greater scope of material related to civilization?

14. Can students in advanced classes read Latin prose or poetry with a fair degree of direct comprehension?

VI. TESTING AND EVALUATION

1. Is evaluation recurrent and planned?

2. Does the teacher use testing materials designed to test exactly what has been taught?

3. Are frequent short tests given and graded promptly to inform the student of his progress?

4. Are students tested regularly for comprehension and speaking skills?

5. Do teacher-made tests reflect, as one result of professional reading, current and sound testing procedures?

6. Is there a definite written evaluation of each student's performance in the skills of comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing available at the end of each year?

7. Is there a supervised program each year for administering appropriate standardized examinations in each language?

8. Is the final grade based on oral and written tests which evaluate performance in the basic skills?

9. Are senior students given the opportunity to examine common types of college entrance exams?